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Author of 'Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush,' 'The Days of Auld Lang Syne,' etc.

NEW YORK
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1895

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TO A. B.

A

FAITHFUL FRIEND

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THE GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE

Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in.

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house

Hush, I pray you!
What if this friend happen to be—God.

—BROWNING.

THE GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE

WHEN some one's biography is written who has wrought great deeds and has filled the eye of the world, various discoveries are made, and not the least interesting has often been the number of his private friends and the closeness of their intimacy. People had supposed that they could have mentioned every person whom he trusted and who influenced him, because they could run over the names joined with his in public affairs and heard from his lips. It is forgotten that this is only to know the staff that ride by a general's side and carry his orders on the battlefield—the official colleagues in a

high enterprise. The multitude are not aware that this man escapes as often as may be possible from the glare of public life, and hides himself in some country house where the scent of roses floats in through the open windows, and manners have a gentle simplicity. Some tribute will be found among the great man's papers to an obscure friend; but no one will ever know what passed between those two when they sat in some quiet garden at set of sun, for neither ever told; or read the letters they wrote one to the other, for they are destroyed. Had you spoken with the hero's friend, he had never boasted or let you understand his honour. No friendship has such a charm as that into which the world cannot intrude, which comes afterwards on the world as a surprise.

Jesus had His public company of friends—the twelve whom He had selected and called to office as a minister forms his cabinet, as a commander appoints his generals. With them He travelled through Galilee, with them He appeared in Jerusalem. He instructed them in the mysteries of the kingdom of God; He gave them directions for its conduct. They were to be the first exemplars of the Christian faith and the pioneers of the Christian enterprise. Some of these might be more congenial to Jesus than others—one was His intimate; but He called them all friends. The twelve will ever be associated with Jesus; they are the college of the Apostles, the missionaries of the Cross. But as one reads the Gospels, other persons emerge like pictures from the shadow in a gallery,

like unaddressed letters in a biography, like initials in a diary. They are persons of whom we only get glimpses, or whose acquaintance with Jesus is barely mentioned. There is Nicodemus, who visited Jesus by night —to the astonishment of St. John —but who was soon afterwards Jesus' friend. Joseph of Arimathea is another of whose intercourse with the Master we know nothing, but who was so devoted to Jesus that when Apostolic hearts had failed he gave Jesus a tomb in his own garden. Martha and Mary have received more notice; but one has to read the references with imagination to realise how Jesus, amid His labours and trials, depended on those pious women for rest and hospitality. And then there is this unknown, whom we can only call 'the goodman of the

house,' who rivalled Joseph of Arimathea in the offices of friendship; for if the one received Jesus to his most sacred place after the Passover was complete, the other afforded Him his choicest room wherein to keep the feast.

The Gospels do not contain a more winsome idyll than the story of the upper room. How Jesus came up to Jerusalem with the multitude to keep the feast, knowing that He Himself should be the Passover Lamb. How He was suspected, slandered, maligned, harassed all the holy week. How, while the poorest of the people had a room of some kind in which they could celebrate the great deliverance, He, of whom it all spoke, had no roof above His head. How He was not concerned or dismayed, but gave directions to His dis-

ciples as if every house in Jerusalem were open to Him. How He spake as if there were an understanding between Him and some secret acquaintance they did not know. How two of the disciples went full of curiosity to a public fountain and looked for a man carrying a pitcher of water. How he gave no sign at seeing them, but immediately arose and went his way. How they followed without hesitation till he came to a certain house and turned to face them at the door. How they asked the question that Jesus gave them, and were taken at once to a room prepared for the purpose. How they departed and returned to Jesus much wondering. The secret communication between the goodman of the house and the Master, the appointed rendezvous in a place where people

were coming and going, the carefully chosen password, the loyal devotion of an unreckoned disciple, are a romance, such as we mostly read of in ancient days, when Royalists declared by stealth their devotion to some hidden and disguised monarch.

One may be sure that behind this simple mystery—the necessity of evil days—lay a better romance of friendship. One day this man, a wealthy and intelligent citizen of Jerusalem, after the type of Nathanael most likely, had heard Jesus preach, and his heart was stirred as when the wind bloweth on the face of the waters. He went alone and quietly to Jesus—not because he was afraid, but because there are people who will not expose their soul to the multitude—and they understood each other in a moment. Wherever it was pos-

sible they met—Jesus and His nameless friend. When they were separated by distance and circumstances, they thought and felt together. He was not one of the apostles—every disciple could not be—but he entered into Jesus' enterprise; he was not seen by Jesus' side—Judas had courage for that—but he loved the Lord. While the rulers were trying to ensnare Jesus by their false questions, and the silly people were chattering about His claims, Jesus' friend was considering how he could help Him. Love is ever thoughtful: love is ever inspired. It enters into another's heart and divines his wishes. 'What can I do for my friend?' I hear the 'goodman of the house' say to himself. 'God has not made me to speak and debate, and there be plenty at

that work. Jesus does not desire to escape the Cross, nor is He afraid : what would He most desire, and what would please Him most before the end? Let me give Him a chamber wherein He may keep His great Passover, and one house in Jerusalem to be His own for the last night.' One would like to know how Jesus looked when His friend made this offer. For once He had been understood ; for once He would be satisfied.

This is only one chapter in a long romance—the friendship of quiet people with Jesus. They meet with Jesus by some happy accident—the seeing of a picture, the reading of a book, the hearing of a sermon—and are instantly attracted, because between them and Jesus there is an affinity of nature. Neither time nor space are conditions in

the intercourse of the soul, and so a steady friendship springs up between those good men and the Master, fed by many a revelation, many an hour of communion, many a succour in spiritual need. They are obscure Christians, for their names cannot be found on the roll of the holy ministry or among the leaders of the religious world. They are often nameless Christians; they are not numbered in any denomination or under any creed. One might never associate these persons with Jesus at all were it not for a certain distinction of manner, as if they had lived in high company; for an accent in conversation which is of Galilee, for a chance remark that reminds one of the Master. It comes upon us as a surprise, for none has seen this man with Jesus. No, not in the

Temple or the wayside ; but we forget the sides of Olivet and many a trysting-place where Apostles may not be always found, or may be sleeping. This is one of Jesus' private friends.

Times come when Jesus' public friends withdraw and disappear : these are the seasons when His private friends show themselves. They are too modest and self-distrustful to air themselves by His side when the people strew branches on the road and cry, ' Hosanna to the Son of David.' When the hosannas die into silence, and the crowd vanishes, they come out from the shadow and claim their friend. While Judas makes his bargain with the priests, they anoint the body of Jesus for the burial. When St. John himself forgets to offer the use of his house for the

Passover, they make ready an upper room. When St. Peter has denied that he ever knew the Lord, they hurry at the moment of greatest risk to own Him before principalities and powers. Simple women have kept the piety of the Church fragrant when famous ecclesiastics have trafficked with gold. Generous hearts have sheltered a homeless Christ in the poor and little children, although they wrote no epistles for after ages. Mystics have confessed His name when it was a by-word, though they might not repeat it in creeds. There is a secret society of the friends of Jesus, and they have a password of their own; as often as Jesus and they meet in the busy street, a flash of intelligence passes between them, and Jesus knows that though every other door in Jerusalem

be closed, the 'goodman of the house' hath his guest-chamber ready.

Certain good deeds receive their wages in the daytime, and certain must wait till set of sun; but some have their due recompense both in this world and in that which is to come, and to this twice-blessed class belongs the hospitality of Jesus' nameless friend. He was not himself present in the room, nor would he expect to be admitted to the fellowship of the Holy Apostles. It was enough for him to keep watch without and take order that Jesus be not disturbed for this brief hour before His death. As Judas left, he would see through the open door the perfect peace of Jesus' family, and St. John's head on Jesus' breast. He would catch the low, sweet sound of Jesus' voice as He

spake in the Holy Sacrament, and perhaps from his place he joined in the hymn they sang before Jesus went out to Gethsemane. The deserted room would seem desolate to him as he entered where there was now no feast, and the very light had gone out with Jesus. With his own hands, and a sad tenderness, would this goodman rearrange the room where the presence of Jesus still lingered in the couch on which He reclined, and the cup He had touched. Then a sudden thought would enter his heart and charge it with pride and gratitude and an exceeding joy. Within his house the Lord had kept the Passover with His disciples: He had given His last discourse at his table; from his house He had gone out to offer His sacrifice. This room was now a sacred

place—no longer for the common uses of life, but to be kept for the Lord, if haply He should return, and His friends. When the disciples crept from their various lodgings on the first day of the week, they made as by an instinct for the goodman's house, and were not surprised to find him waiting in the shadow of the door. He knew that they would come, and, as is the way in our deeper hours, he led them without a word to the upper room. It was to that room—as we imagine—the women came with the first news of the Resurrection, the goodman being now with the company ; and later in the day a new Simon arrived, fresh from a solitary meeting, with Jesus—the joy-light shining through his tears—and declared for himself, 'The Lord hath risen' ; and hither hurried

back Cleopas and his companion hot-foot from Emmaus to make known that the Lord had been seen in the breaking of bread. But this favoured room was to receive yet higher honour, for here—the doors being shut—the Risen Lord appeared in their midst and said, 'Peace be unto you.' Here He showed His hands and His feet unto St. Thomas; here He breathed on His disciples and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost'; here, a few weeks later, the Holy Ghost descended on the Church. Many cathedrals have been built unto the honour of Jesus' name, but none can ever be so dear to the Church as the goodman's house. Times without number have the disciples of the Lord celebrated the Holy Supper, but none can be compared with the evening when with His own

hands Jesus gave the bread and the wine. The Blessed Spirit which proceedeth from the Father and the Son moveth the hearts of men in all ages, but it can never be forgotten that He descended from the Risen Lord in a certain place. The Church of the New Testament was born in a room which the mindful hospitality of the 'goodman' afforded to Jesus.

It might well seem that the using of his room were enough guerdon, but Jesus had still something in store for His friend. The last time they met beneath the olives the goodman had pledged Jesus to come to his house before He went to the Cross, and Jesus had kept the tryst, as all the Church of God below knoweth; and then before they parted Jesus would pledge the goodman to visit Him in

His house after he was done with earth, and one day the goodman kept this other tryst, as the Church of God above knoweth. As a monarch in a foreign land Jesus had received ungrudging hospitality ; now it was His opportunity to pay the debt in His own country, and one loves to think of the meeting. His friend had dared to have Jesus for his guest the day before the Crucifixion, and in His turn Jesus would confess His friend's name before His Father and the holy angels. With his own hands had this citizen of Jerusalem made ready his best chamber for Jesus, and the Master would not fail to prepare a place for him in the heavenly city. Upon the threshold had this householder met the Lord and entreated Him to come in, and of all who have ever

passed through the gates into the city, none have received a more grateful welcome than 'the goodman of the house.'

THE GUEST-CHAMBER OF THE SOUL

The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

The house is not for me—it is for him.
His Royal thoughts require many a stair,
Many a tower, many an outlook fair,
Of which I have no thought, and need no care.
Where I am most perplexed, it may be there
Thou mak'st a secret chamber, holy—dim
Where thou wilt come to help my deepest prayer.

—George MacDonald.

THE GUEST-CHAMBER OF THE SOUL

No one can fail to notice that Jesus spent His life for the most part in the open air, and that the Gospels carry on them the breath of the country. He founded His kingdom on a hill-side, where the wind blew as it listed, and His chosen oratory was under the silver olive-trees. Time and again Jesus fled to the desert, where the pasture-lilies grew in their unclothed multitude, or to some solitary place where He could be alone with God in the cool and silent night. The people came to see 'a young man preaching in a boat,' and He spoke to them of the sower that went forth to sow. This Mas-

ter loved to teach His disciples amid the standing corn, and led the outcast into the paths of peace where the trees cast their shadow over a Samaritan well. His nation rejected Him in the morning light before Pilate's palace, and the Messiah was crucified upon a green hill 'outside a city wall.' Our Faith is sane and reasonable, with its radiant facts, its convincing principles, its simple commandments, its practical services, its wide sympathies, a religion with the arch of blue above its head and the homely wild flowers round its feet.

It will also be remembered that Jesus did not disdain human homes, with their sorrow and pain, their wealth also of love and promise, and so it has come to pass that some of the finest scenes in the Gospels are in-

teriors. It was at a marriage feast Jesus wrought His first miracle, and His glory shone forth that day as in Tintoretto's picture of Cana, where the light breaks on the faces of the golden-haired Venetian women. A softer light falls on Nicodemus as he inquires the way of truth; and in the shadow of the room St. John watches and understands. Within Simon's inhospitable house, St. Mary Magdalene was delivered from her woeful past, when, counting that her sin had dashed Christ Himself, she washed His feet with her tears, and so cleansed both her Saviour and herself. And the Church of all ages has made her pious pilgrimage to the goodman's house, and seen in tender imagination Jesus giving of His body and blood to the twelve in sign of the sacrifice

He had offered all His life, and was next day to complete on Calvary. So it is to be laid to heart that our faith is also inward, with visions when the water of life turns into the wine of God, with experiences when the whole trend of thought is changed, with repentances when a broken heart ends in peace, with deliverances when dumb instincts of the soul turn into certainty, with hours of communion when the soul is baptized into the spirit of Jesus' sacrifice. For one to be a Christian, it is only necessary that he be loyal; but to be a Christian of the first order, he must be mystical. Jesus still comes to us in our outer life, and blessed is the man who arises and follows Him whithersoever He goes. Jesus still comes to the door of the soul, and that man

is most blessed who receives the Lord into his guest-chamber.

Jesus is the best of all the guests who visit the human soul. It is with the soul as with a house in this matter of hospitality. Houses there are where no fire is lit in the guest-chamber from January to December, where no generous feast is placed upon the board, where there is no kindly excitement on the threshold, because no guest ever rests beneath that roof. The householder may be most respectable, but he can hardly have much humanity, and it is certain that his family will suffer loss. The coming of guests revives and enriches the common life, for each one has his own tale to tell. His presence in the house is an inspiration, and he does not utterly depart with the God-speed at the outer gate; some-

thing has been left behind, the effect of another individuality which leaves its trace on the household, and a subtle fragrance, as when sandal-wood has lain for a while in paper, or rosemary among clothes. Guests which came in the body have been to many as the angels, for they sealed the promises of God, and opened new worlds to their faith. More grateful still must be the strangers who come in the spirit, and visit our souls, the masters who, being dead, yet live for ever in their books and works. How dreary and unwholesome must be the mind whose blinds are ever drawn, whose door is ever locked, while the sunlight beats on the roof and the merry crowd sing in the street. How favoured and content must be the mind where the prophets of God

come, not as strangers, with formality and diffidence, but as friends that have their appointed room, and use the passwords of the house. He who hath Socrates and Virgil, and Dante and Shakespeare, in his guest-chamber, need not vex himself for that his house be small, because nobles do not always entertain such company in their castles. Among all the spiritual guests that cross our threshold, Jesus is not only incomparably the best by the excellence of His Divinity, but also the most intimate by the presence of the same Divinity. He wrote no book, and does not live in books. He is not distant—somewhere in the unseen world—but present, here, in the midst of human life. We do not merely read of Him —He speaks to us; we do not merely learn His thoughts—we

come to know Himself. If any one receive Him into his soul, Jesus comes to have a place of His own that has no parallel in life, and which has no proof save in experience. While the public come and go through the house in the busy daytime, this guest keeps His room; but in the quiet hours He sits with us. We make Him the confidant of our secrets, but in the end He tells us things about ourselves we have not known. We turn to Him for help, but find that He has promised what we were about to ask. We declare a good intention, only to remember it was His suggestion. His presence is an irresistible condemnation of wrongdoing, a perpetual inspiration of welldoing. He joineth Himself as by an accident to men on the ways of life, and afterwards maketh as

though He would go farther. When they constrain Him to abide, it does not matter whether the soul be as a palace or a cottage; He will enter, and the tenant will become a saint.

When any one receives Jesus as a guest, he ought to give Him the Upper Room. For it happens that there are fashions in this matter of spiritual hospitality; and though they be all well intended, they are not all equally successful. Some receive Jesus in the public room where the work of life is done, and He will not despise their laborious service—the anxious Marthas of the Christian devotion. But she could have done better for Jesus. Some pay Him court in that austere room where the accounts of life are kept and audited, and Jesus has not come to belittle their obedience, who are of St.

James's righteous kind. But there is something higher than law. Some delight to see their Master in the room that is lined with books of ancient learning, and Jesus hath a tender regard for the St. Pauls that must know the mysteries of His Person. Yet is there something far above theology. For some have not been content to hold Jesus anywhere save in the room which is nearest to the sky, which has windows to the grey east and the golden west, and all day long is full of warm light; and when Jesus, wearied after many fruitless journeys, is brought within the door, He is satisfied, as one who has come home. This is sometimes called St. John's room, because he wrote pleasantly about it and the things he had seen from its windows; and no one will gainsay that it

is the Upper Room. For work is good, and righteousness is good, and knowledge is good, but best of all is love. And all the other rooms in the soul are gathered under love. Be sure he will not fail in sacrifice who loves the Lord; his conscience will be tender that is bathed in love, and no one can know deep mysteries who does not love. Love is Jesus' chosen guest-chamber, and he that has Jesus for a guest has power, and goodness, and truth, and God.

Jesus needeth a large Upper Room, for it is His habit to travel with a band of friends. He did not like to be alone in His life, save when He separated Himself for a space, and retired into the secret place of God. His delight was to gather congenial men to His side, and travel in the paths of life with them. He

shared the round of human experience with His disciples, except certain last trials which He kept for His own special share, and revealed Himself to them so familiarly that they have given us a likeness of Him more precious than all the books in the world. During the centuries He has been ever adding to the number of His friends with a very wide charity, and now He seeks hospitality for a large company. Any one who gave a feast to Jesus in Galilee had to count on twelve disciples also; but he were a shrewd calculator that could now estimate the number of His following. There are those who would fain have Jesus without His friends, but the Master does not relish this invitation, for He considereth that if we have not love enough to afford them house-room we

can have very little for Him. There are those whose guest-chamber is so small that they think it impossible to squeeze in the disciples however much they desired, in which case it is high time they were building a wider, airier Upper Room; and perhaps there may be certain who would stand at the lower door and discriminate—admitting one and refusing another. These good folk forget that where a royal personage honoureth a house he invites his own company, and also that they might make mistakes for ever to be regretted, letting in Judas Iscariot and shutting out Judas not Iscariot. It is the chief loss of life to miss entertaining Jesus, but it would be a severe loss also, if it be indeed possible to have the Master without His disciples, since each one (even Judas

at a time) can tell us something of Jesus. They do themselves an injury that have likes and dislikes among the friends of Jesus. Our wisdom, to say nothing of our charity, is to show hospitality to every one that has lived with Jesus, for so will come to our lowly roof, not only St. John and St. Paul, but also Tauler and Thomas à Kempis, St. Francis and St. Bernard, George Herbert and Jeremy Taylor, John Bunyan and Richard Baxter, Samuel Rutherford and Archbishop Leighton, with many others of various creeds, but of one Love. They will be acceptable guests, and this curious thing will come to pass, that with every new guest our room will grow larger, until at last it will seem as if our poor guest-chamber, like that of the 'goodman of the house,'

held the whole Church of God.

Jesus is satisfied with very simple furnishing, as is plain if any one will take an inventory of the 'goodman's' room. An ewer full of clean cold water at the door, that the feet soiled on life's journey may be cleansed before entering into the Divine fellowship. There must also be a towel that, after the Master's example, proud disciples, contending who shall be greatest, may be compelled for shame's sake to lay aside their highmindedness, as one strips off a coat, and learn to serve. Purity and humility go far to make a fair chamber for Jesus, and one other thing only is needed—faith. The goodman provided a table, but he left it to Jesus to bring the feast, and Jesus ever desireth the empty soul that He may fill it

with His grace. In the refectory of San Marco of Florence there is a very pleasant picture wherein St. Dominic is seated at table with his monks, and he is asking a blessing over cups that have no wine and platters without bread. His companions are amazed, but even while the saint is praying the angels of God are moving unseen through the room, carrying that bread of which if any man eat he shall never hunger again. For it cometh to pass in this hospitality that if any one furnisheth a chamber for Jesus he shall find he is the guest, and Jesus has become the Host.

THE TWELVE

"He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him."

"As for me, I am of the order of all the saints, and all the saints are of my order."—*La Mère Angélique.*

THE TWELVE

ALL the words of Jesus are precious, but one is inclined to arrange them into an ascending series after the fashion of the 'Paradiso.' Jesus first of all laid down the principles, conditions, characteristics, and aims of His new society in the Sermon on the Mount. This is the character of the kingdom of God. Later He describes the growth, struggles, dangers, and hindrances of the kingdom in the Parable of the Sower, and its companions. This is the history of the Kingdom. By-and-bye He goes deeper, and in the synagogue of Capernaum He unfolds His idea of life—how

death is the gate of life and men must eat His Flesh and drink His Blood. This is the secret of the kingdom. And then, before Jesus went to the cross, He assembled His little band of followers round a common table and told them that love was the one bond of union in heaven and earth. This is the fellowship of the kingdom of God. So Jesus met His disciples in the outer court of the Law, and led them into the heart of the Father.

Among the discourses of Jesus, the one in the Upper Room stands alone, and a certain circumstance doubles its interest. It is a conversation, and the conversations of Jesus have a peculiar attraction. There are two people—Jesus and another—and the other is my representative. He has his difficulty, Jesus re-

moves it ; he falls into some mistake, Jesus corrects it ; he asks his question, Jesus answers it. It is my case he states. When he is satisfied, so am I. I am in turn Nicodemus and Nathanael. I am the woman of Samaria and the young ruler. Without these people, their stupidity, their earnestness, their agony, their relief, the Gospels had been poorer. They gave play to the patience and wisdom of Jesus ; they called forth His grace and compassion. Jesus' chief conversation took place when He sat down with the apostles at the Last Supper. There were twelve guests, and six spoke by word or deed. As each comes forward, one can identify the type and recognise himself. When all have uttered themselves, the Church of Christ is revealed in miniature, as it has

stood before the world for eighteen centuries.

It comes as a surprise that one class of religious people is unrepresented: no disciple is perfect. With a single exception they were honest men, who believed in Jesus, who had followed Him loyally, who loved the kingdom of God and had given their lives to its service. But their minds were darkened by ignorance, their hearts were beset by sin, their lives were too sadly dominated by self, their wills were still infirm. They had not finished their battle; they had not won their race. They were just beginning to fight—just stripping themselves for the course. No man had come to his full height, not even John. Taking them all in all—these pioneers of Christendom—they were not conspicuously

wiser, truer, bolder, nor, even including Judas, more worldly, false, cowardly than twelve Christians of to-day. They had still to be made, and one of them would break finally, as it appears, in the firing. They sat with Jesus in the Upper Room, fairly well satisfied with themselves, but they would have to pass through much discipline before they sat down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. One of them was to fall before he could learn to stand; one would be quickly put to the sword—not the least fortunate; one would be left alone in his old age—most tried, most purified, most loved of all; some would wander far and wide beyond our ken. Jesus would keep every true man and give him the victory. They wanted thrones, and Jesus gave them

the cross; but they got their thrones in the end, that handful of Jewish peasants, and are judging the twelve tribes of Israel to-day. Jesus was not amazed that they were imperfect; Jesus was not impatient with their faults. If perfection be the condition of discipleship in the Christian society, then honest men will be obliged to go out, beginning at the best down to the worst. Jesus will be left alone with the Pharisees.

It is the false disciple who is the trial of Jesus, and Judas was the first to put himself in evidence. This was not because he had anything to say: his speaking had been done elsewhere and his cue now was silence. His deed stood in place of words and lifted him into prominence, for the moment the most exacting and influential of

the twelve. Jesus was unable to look on Judas and hold His peace. Here was a man who had been called to the apostolate and had pledged himself to the cause, who had worked with Jesus, lived with Jesus, called Jesus Lord for three years ; who had been moved by false ambition from the beginning ; who had worn a mask in the most sacred presence ; who had misused the slender means of the little fellowship ; who had arranged to make something tangible out of his Master ; who had arranged that Jesus should be betrayed where He prayed—in Gethsemane. One does not imagine Judas as a man of evil looks or unbelieving speech : more likely he was an ingratiating personage with an easy flow of noble sentiments. He betrayed Jesus with a polite man-

ner. Many men are far more trying than Judas, and play the fool as this astute man never would. But one's moral sense has no doubt that Judas is the worst type in life. One may pardon his friend if he be a drunkard or a miser, or if he be filled with pride or be the victim of an evil temper; but there is no way of living with falsehood. Treachery breaks friendship: it cannot be endured. The presence of Judas was heavier on Jesus than the cross. While that face was in the room Jesus could not speak with freedom; He could hardly breathe. As soon as Judas departed 'it was night' without, but within, a load was lifted from the soul of Jesus and He cried: 'Now is the Son of Man glorified.' Yet the Master did His best by Judas, and would fain have saved

him from himself. He kept Judas by His side after the character of the man had appeared; He declared in Galilee the spirit that lived in him; He let him know in Jerusalem that his plots were an open secret. Jesus gave Judas one opportunity after another of confession. As He washed his feet, the touch of Jesus' hand; when He offered him the sop, the look on Jesus' face; when He told him to do his work quickly, the sound of Jesus' voice, were means of grace. If, at this last moment, he had cast himself on his Master's mercy, we should have mentioned his name to-day—the chief sinner saved. Judas was to be Jesus' failure.

After Judas went out Peter took occasion to declare that he would die for Jesus, and afterwards he denied Jesus; but we

must never confound the cowardice of Peter with the treachery of Judas. This Apostle was a bundle of logical and moral inconsistencies. He confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, and yet would give Him advice. He would strike a hasty blow for Jesus, and yet could not watch with Him one hour. He would go to meet Him on the water, and yet was afraid he should be drowned. He saw Christ's holiness so clearly one day that he was confounded, but at another time he tempted his Lord like Satan himself. He was the bravest man of the Twelve in the Upper Room ; in the High Priest's palace he swore Jesus was a stranger. If one were to go by the bare evidence of facts it would be impossible to prove Peter an honest man ; if one estimates the

trend of character Peter cannot be cast out. Send him after Judas if you please, you have not got rid of Peter: he only remains outside the door weeping bitterly. He stands for that enormous class who are a patent perplexity in the eyes of the Church, the world, and themselves. The smoke is driven to and fro by sudden gusts of wind, and yet, in spite of all, it is still ascending. The life is blazing with contradictions, but the heart follows Christ.

Thomas speaks next, who was a complete contrast to Peter, both in his strength and weakness. This was no creature of impulses and emotions—first to confess, to promise, to strike, to flee; but a strong, silent, reserved, gloomy nature. Very slowly would this man make up his mind, and very severely

would he try all the evidence, but where he took his stand, he would stand, and there also he would die. He has vindicated the right of scepticism within the Church; for he was by virtue of his questioning nature, a sceptic, and by virtue of his loyalty, a Christian. The characteristic of Thomas is not that he doubted—that were an easy passport to religion—but that he doubted and loved. His doubt was the measure of his love: his doubt was swallowed up in love. This is the reason John understood Thomas, because they were both great lovers of Jesus. He declared his belief that if Jesus went to Bethany he would be killed, but in the same breath Thomas declared his intention of going to die with Him. He was certain that Jesus had not risen from the dead, but was

plainly broken-hearted on that account. Confessions he could not make. Neither was he capable of denials. He was not good at believing ; his strength lay in loving. His views were dim and defective, but he clung with the affection of a dumb animal to Jesus. 'Whither I go ye know,' said Jesus, 'and the way ye know.' Thomas protested at once against such reckless drafts upon his faith. 'We know nothing, Lord, but Thyself ; ' which may be enough in the end, for Jesus said, 'Thou knowest all then. I am the way, the truth and the life.'

Jesus' conversation with Thomas was a little trying to a fourth Apostle whose mind was alien to every kind of speculation. Philip was the very type of plain downright common sense, the mind to whom the

multiplication-table will ever be the model for a creed. It was he who calculated how many pennyworths of bread it would take to feed the multitude, and who met Nathanael's difficulties about Jesus with an abrupt 'Come and see.' Philip could hardly be patient with Thomas, who seemed always in a fog; he became a little impatient even with Jesus when He spoke of seeing the Father. As a matter of fact, they had not seen the Father, but a theophany was what they did want. 'Show us the Father and it sufficeth us.' Good, worthy Philip: one realises as by a flash the limits of triumphant common sense. Religion demands some insight, some imagination, some spirituality; it is not exhausted in every day duty. Philip is an average Englishman; his faith, with many

robust excellences, wants the touch of Celtic mystery, but it can always be depended on to produce righteousness.

No one else interrupted Jesus till He spoke of the way in which He would manifest Himself to His disciples and not to the world. This distinction excited a disciple who makes his solitary appearance on this occasion, and who is known as Judas, not Iscariot. Tradition has it that he was an ultra Jew and one of Jesus' most bigoted followers. Very likely he had been alarmed by the unlimited charity of Jesus and the promiscuous gathering of the Christian Church. Jesus at last recognised the right of His friends to some exclusive privileges, and was prepared to safeguard them by some barrier. Jesus would manifest Himself to the few—

that was right; He would not manifest Himself to the many—that also was right. But how? Judas was anxious to learn the condition of this esoteric communion—Judas expected some sign, or rite, or creed, to be the separating line between covenanted and uncovenanted people. Jesus answered, Love. If any one loved the wide world over, in him God would dwell. It was a delicate rebuke to Judas, and one always enjoys the chastisement of bigotry. But let us not be too hard on the Judas type, calling it narrow and obscurantist. Let us do its members justice. Judas may not be liberal—be sure he will be loyal—and if he may think it right to send you to the stake, he will also go himself to the death for conscience' sake. Judas he is, but not Iscariot.

One disciple has heard every word which was said in the Upper Room, and by-and-bye he will write the history in his Gospel. Meanwhile John lays his head on Jesus' breast and keeps silence. Why should he speak? What question had the beloved disciple to ask? Judas's treachery had not come as a surprise on John, for his instincts had made him shrink from the false soul. He needed not to inquire the way to Heaven, for the intimate of Jesus had been walking therein for three years. For him no physical theophany was needed who had looked on the face of Jesus. What were mysteries to other men who had only sight, were revelations to him who had vision. A sceptic must question and argue, it is his necessity: a mystic has only to learn and listen, it is his felicity.

Once John did speak, but it was not for himself. Peter wished to know who should betray Jesus, and made his appeal through John. 'Lord, who is it?' whispered John with a friend's liberty. A mystic gathers truth as a plant absorbs the light, in silence and without effort. His service to his brethren is to ask secrets of the Lord.

Six typical men—a false disciple, a faulty disciple, a sceptical disciple, a practical disciple, a narrow disciple, a mystical disciple; and yet, with one exception, there is a place for each in the fellowship of Christ.

Six disciples, and for them all one Lord, who unveils Judas, sending him forth to finish his work and to die of remorse; who rebukes the self-confidence of Peter and foretells his bitter humiliation; who takes Thomas

by the hand and leads him through the darkness; who offers to Philip the sure evidence of His life and works; who loosens the bonds of Judas, not Iscariot, and brings him into a large place; who satisfies John with Himself and His love,—one glorious Christ who is unto each disciple what he needed and more than he imagined, a place of 'broad rivers and streams,' Judge, Saviour, Prophet, Master, Deliverer, Friend.

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

Jesus knew that His hour was come.

Many soul-longings
Have I had in my day,
Now the hope of my life
Is that tree of triumph
Ever to turn to.

—CÆDMON.

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

ONE of the modern masters, touched by the ancient spirit of religious art, has given us the interior of the Carpenter's house at Nazareth, when the hour is 'toward evening and the day is far spent.' The mellow light of the setting sun floods the workshop, bringing into relief every shaving on the floor and the rough tools hanging on the wall, and softens the distant blue seen through an open window. The Carpenter has had a long day and after many hours of striving and toiling is wearily stretching Himself in the doorway. Standing at full height, with upturned face and extended arms, His

form cast a shadow across the poor room, and a woman kneeling in a corner recognises the ominous outlines of the Cross and the Crucified Man. In this picture art has represented with much insight that feature of Jesus' life which distinguishes it from every other, and has invested it with a lonely, unapproachable sadness. It was not a life which happened to end on a Cross, a woeful tragedy: it was a life perpetually under the shadow of a Cross—a calculated sacrifice. It was a day divided into hours and the great hour was Calvary. Wherefore it is written, 'When Jesus knew that His hour was come.'

The goal of our vision and effort is not the valley of death but the gates of life. A young mother holds the first-born in her arms and prays that she may

see him one day a man in his prime. His father dreams of the work the boy may do when his own race has been run. The lad sees the long day stretch before him and imagines what he will achieve before sunset. The man in the heat of life strives and toils that he may finish his life work. And the patriarch forgets his years as he lives afresh in his children's children. We are not born that we may die, but that we may live: we labour that we may live more abundantly. We fix our minds on living, we guard ourselves against death. The will of God for men is life, and the Bible is the record of life, full, free, rejoicing; of men who loved, who married, who did great works, who died in old age. For one Man only was there another will, of one Man's death only

does the Bible make more than His life. This is singular and deserving to be noted, for as it is the sign of ordinary books to make much of death it belongs unto the grandeur of the Bible to speak ever of life. The Evangelists wrote from the foot of the Cross and have a certain note of Calvary. Two record that Jesus was born of a Virgin Mother; four that He was crucified; two that He had a sore conflict with the Evil One; four that He was crucified; two that He spake the last words on character; four that He was crucified. The world could not contain the books that might be written about His life, but it seemed unto His friends the chief event that Jesus died.

When Jesus sat down with the Twelve, the Bread and Wine on the table were the prophecy of

His crucifixion, but long before, the omens of death had attended Him. Before He was born Prophets described His sufferings, Priests had pictured his sacrifice, Poets had sung His requiem. As soon as born He was baptized with blood in the massacre of the Innocents ; and His Mother could not present Him without being told that a sword would pierce her heart. When the Baptist saw Him in the beginning of His ministry, the Forerunner identified Him as the Passover Lamb ; and the High Priest could not think of Him without declaring that it was expedient that He should die, so clearly did all men detect the mysterious shadow that marks those appointed unto death. He was not blind to the direction of His life and through His teaching runs ever a sombre

thread. He is the Temple which is going to be destroyed, the heir who is to be killed, the fruit of that which is to fall into the ground, the Shepherd who is to lay down His life. He sees Himself in the sacrifices of Hebrew worship; He reads Himself into the most plaintive prophecies; He allies Himself with the martyrs slain in Jerusalem. When His disciples desire to share His throne, He tells them they must drink His cup; when a devoted woman anoints His Body He explains that it is for His burial. If He hides Himself it is only that He may not die before His time; if He offers any defence it is for the sake of His disciples. He kept a traitor among His disciples and told him to do his work quickly. He forbade a sword to be drawn for His help and

offered Himself to the soldiers. He preached, He arranged, He journeyed, He prepared for death. Other men rise step by step till they stand on a breezy table-land where they live: this man went down till the shadows deepened into the darkness of Calvary.

Three times, during His public life, did Jesus anticipate the end, and stand face to face with the Cross. He declared to an astonished Pharisee who had come to speak with Him regarding the Kingdom of God, that he must one day be lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness; and Nicodemus understood that dark saying when he took down Jesus' body from the Cross. He began a sermon in the Synagogue of Capernaum by speaking about the Bread of Life, and then under the inevita-

ble attraction Jesus passed from the white and innocent bread to flesh and blood, seeing, as it were through an open door against the kindly Galilean blue, the empty Cross inviting Him. On His last journey the disciples marked with awe that His face was set as one who is straitened till his work be done, and they never forgot how He took them aside to tell them of His coming death while the people passed in their joy to keep the Passover Feast.

With the Resurrection it might have been expected that the Cross would have been obliterated, but it only reappeared in the consciousness of the Church. While other leaders of men are remembered because they lived, this Man asked it to be remembered that He died. The sign of identification He

gave to a doubting disciple was the marks in His hands and feet, and of all the risen Christs in art, the best is that of Sarto, because the face has the sad mystery of one who had suffered and the crossed hands have still the wound prints. St. Paul only touches lightly on the life of Jesus, but the Cross is to him the starting-point and end of all his teaching and St. John saw in the midst of the throne a Lamb as He was slain. After pious hands had removed Jesus' body the soldiers carried away the two rude beams on which He had died, and one visiting Calvary on Good Friday evening had seen no sign of the great tragedy save trampled grass and a few drops of blood. Within a few years another Cross was set up, mystical and eternal, whose shape is like unto a throne and

whose shadow has reached unto the ends of the earth.

The Upper Room has grown into a universal Church with all kinds and conditions of men, but the Host remains unchanged and is for ever thought of as giving His broken Body and shed Blood. Theology has many departments, but the most fruitful and effectual is that which expounds the Death of Jesus. Religious art has done her best by the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Ascension, the Judgment, but has reached her height in a Crucifixion. If Christians ask to be delivered from their sins it is by the Cross and Passion of Jesus, and if they declare their faith it is in Him who was crucified and who overcame the sharpness of death. Christian hymnology has found her deepest inspiration at the Cross and

Christian worship comes to a height in the celebration of Jesus' Death. The Church of Christ has made her home beneath the shadow of the Cross.

Had one questioned the little band that evening how Jesus' death would be of any good unto them or the world, then it is likely that St. John himself had been silent. Much has been written since by devout scholars, and some of their words have helped and some have hindered, and the reason of the great mystery of sacrifice has not yet been declared. After all has been said the weary heart turns from learned books to the Upper Room, where, as He once gave the signs, so now for ever Jesus giveth Himself to all that will take Him and His Cross; and this thing alone is certain that every one who tak-

eth Him with an honest heart is made clean and strong. There is one modern Crucifixion which is perfectly satisfying because it leaves everything beyond Jesus and the soul to the imagination. It is a space of black darkness, with some dim strokes of light, and as you try to pierce the gloom they suggest the form of a Crucified Man. The face is faintly visible and a ray from the forehead striking downwards reveals a kneeling figure at the foot of the Cross. Within the secret place of this mystery the human soul and Jesus meet and become one.

It seemed as if none could be weaker than Jesus in the Upper Room and that His weakness was the Cross. No one in reality was heir to such dominion and glory, and the guarantee of the fitness was the Cross. The

sympathy of the Cross is history, and in all ages, as often as the world falls to pieces round a man, he takes him to the shelter of the Crucified. When an earthquake swept along the Riviera, the priest and people of one little village, perched on the hillside, were at early service, and they saw their church begin to shake. One place only was immovable, the altar: one figure only was untouched, the Christ above it. Round His feet the terrified people gathered and were safe. Next day the Man of Sorrows looked down on the waste of ruins and His face was full of compassion.

A LAST WISH

This do in remembrance of me.

He was the Word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it,
And what that Word did make it
I doe beleeve and take it.

—DONNE.

A LAST WISH

No human being lives who does not desire to be remembered after he has departed from this world, and in proportion to the loyalty of his own love will be the strength of this passion. It would add a new horror to death to think that one was no sooner out of sight than he was also out of mind, and had no longer any place in the thoughts of those with whom he lived and laboured, whom he loved and served. What avail is there in life which is so soon dissipated? 'What treasure is there in love which so quickly fades?' It would rob death of half its sting to be assured that daily your

face would live before the vision of faithful hearts, and your memory, with redeeming faults as well as some few excellences, be kept green by unchanging affection. Few contrasts come nearer to the tears of things than two graves side by side in a dreary city cemetery. On the one the grass grows rank and unrelieved, though the latest date be only a year old, while on the other the forget-me-nots are flowering, and there are fresh signs of a ten years' vigil. This name needed not to be graven on stone for it has been printed for ever on some fond heart.

Our Master was most human in the Upper Room, and with His last wish suggests irresistibly a mother's farewell. She does not remind her children that she has done all things for them at sore cost, for this was

her joy. Nor does she make demands of hard service now any more than in the past. But one thing the mother hungereth and thirsteth for, and desireth not with words only but with her eyes as she looketh round on those she can no longer serve, but will ever love. 'Do not forget me'—how few and short the words, how full and strong are they written out at large. 'Live as I would wish, believe as I have believed: meet me where I go,' all that is the prayer, but mostly this, 'Think of me, realise me—love me till we stand once more face to face.' After the same fashion of the heart, which is the same in all ages, in God also as in man, Jesus looked round the Twelve gathered at the Holy Table. For three years he had given everything to them, and they

had given nothing to Him. He had called them by name and opened to them the Kingdom of God. He had loosed the intolerable burden of their sins, and answered the secret longings of their souls. Already He was planning how they might escape from the hatred of His enemies, so that not one of them who had been blessed by His life should suffer in His death. One thing only they could do for their Lord, one thing He desired of them, with that He would go to the Cross content. He could endure Calvary, but not that He be forgotten by John and Peter and the company of the three years. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a very great mystery, and it is the means of conveying unspeakable blessings, but the Lord intended that the Bread and Wine should first

of all win for Him His one request that He be remembered.

Has it not come to pass with many Christian folk that the good Lord who loveth us is to their minds little else than a picture of fine colours in a golden frame, and that He is not thought of as utter flesh and blood who can bear anything, be it ever so cruel and shameful, for His friends, but whose heart will break if He should be forgotten. Yet, is not this the Lord most of us need, in whom we would be satisfied? Some there may be of such exalted imagination that they can only conceive of Jesus in the Glory of the Father with the Holy Angels. Others there are whose souls demand a nearer, kinder, humaner Lord, and they find Him in the Master who offered the symbols of His love with a certain wistfulness, be-

cause as on earth He felt most of all desertion, so in the ages He could only live unto His liking in the hearts of His friends.

Jesus does not need to plead that He be remembered in the world, for indeed He cannot be overpassed. If the Gospels and every writing of the faith were destroyed beyond recovery, the Church, dominant in two Continents, visible in two more, presenting a perennial vigour, and shedding an indescribable grace, would compel attention. If the Church also were obliterated in some like unimaginable catastrophe, Jesus had not disappeared. The chief philanthropies of civilised nations, the state books of government, the constitution of society are the outcome of Jesus Spirit. It is impossible to explain human life or human history without Jesus,

who is woven into the consciousness of the race, who will yet find in the race His everlasting memorial. His presence is everywhere as the sunlight which at some hour strikes into each nook, which colours each flower. But Jesus is not to be for one moment thought of as simply the divinest of all the forces that mould life to God, immanent by His Spirit, but as the Man who ever loves most passionately and hungers most for love. He careth little for monuments; He craveth for hearts. Jesus is only satisfied when the doors are shut to the world; and in a quiet place His friends meet to keep His commandment. Whether it be in the shadow of a cathedral where the hushed multitude kneel at the lifting of the Host, or in some Puritan meeting-room where the

elements of the Sacrament are passed from hand to hand, or on the mountain side where Scottish covenanters keep the Feast, or in the dreary Catacombs where early Christians show forth the death they may to-morrow share, it is the same to Him who is above all rites, who lives for love.

It happened once that a family had a father who was a benefactor to the state and did such service that after his death a statue was erected in a public place to his memory, and on the pedestal his virtues were engraven that all might read his name and revere his memory. His children mingled with the people as they stood in that square and listened to their father's praise with pride. But their eyes were dry. This figure with civic robes, cut in stone,

was not the man they knew and loved. Within the home were other memorials more intimate, more dear, more living—a portrait, a packet of letters, a Bible. As the family looked on such sacred possessions, they remembered him who had laboured for them, had trained them from first years, had counselled, comforted, protected them. All he had done for the big world was as nothing to what he had done for his own. When they gathered round the hearth he built, on certain occasions they spoke of him with gentler voices, with softened eyes, while the strangers pass on the street. This Father is Jesus, and we are His children whom He has loved unto death.

No one in the wide world is so miserable and destitute as the man who has never been

loved. There is no crime which might not be excused, which might not almost be forgiven to that wronged soul. We cannot imagine how power and joy and hope of life are due to love of father, mother, wife, or child. Yet this love has been conditioned and limited. There is only one love of human experience that has transcended time and space and sight which embraces a multitude no man can number, and has made for them, born and unborn, far and near, the last sacrifice. It was the passionate conviction of Jesus' love for each disciple, for some Scottish shepherd as well as for St. John, that gave strength and tenderness to faith in former days; but it looks as if this belief had weakened. Good Christians do not now say with fond hearts, 'Whom Jesus loved' or

'Who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Our religion has become a matter of the Creeds, or of public service, or of the æsthetic worship, or of vague sentiment, it has almost ceased to be a relationship of love between two persons, Jesus and the soul, and so Christianity is losing its mystical charm.

With those even of the school of St. John and St. Paul, the remembrance of Jesus is apt to share the fate of all our loves. There are a few fine souls who love once because they love for ever, whose devotion is independent of sight, whose constancy deepens in absence. They have their reward in a delicate beauty of character, in a rare spirituality of temper denied to those of crasser mould. They need no sacraments, their love is an endless sacrament. With most peo-

ple, however, time is only too sure a comforter, and nothing in life's tragedy is more sad than the rapidity of our forgetting.

It seemed, after our loss, as if life could never regain its buoyancy, and that we must always be haunted with a sense of loneliness. But the impression grows dim on our world-worn heart, and would soon be effaced were it not for the magical resources of memory. The discovery of a letter will recreate the past and awaken slumbering emotions, and vindicate the omnipotence of love. The supreme love of our souls, the passion for Jesus, is subject to such subtle decays, such sudden revivals. No one has lived the inner life without seasons of early passions when the romance of Jesus has captured the soul, without seasons of later declension when

the greenery of spring grew grey in the city dust. It is in such hours of coldness and weariness we ought to reinforce our souls with the Sacrament of the Bread and Wine. As one makes a journey to some country kirkyard where the dust of his departed are lying, and cleanses away the moss that has filled up the letters of his mother's name, so do we in the Holy Communion again assure ourselves of a love so amazing that it passes knowledge, but so utterly Divine that it must be true.

THE BEQUEST OF JESUS

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

I know how to live with God.

—MYSTIC.

THE BEQUEST OF JESUS

IT is a custom of human society that any one about to depart from this world arranges his affairs and divides his goods among those whom he loves and is to leave behind. He makes his will, and wills in this matter have to do with things that can be seen and held in the hand. Those that receive a portion count themselves fortunate, those that are passed over make complaint, and many people watch what becometh of a man's possessions when he and they are parted for ever. No one is released from this last duty except he who has nothing, and, therefore, it soundeth like a paradox to say that Jesus also

made His will and was careful to bequeath His goods to His friends. For was there ever any man poorer than Jesus after He had finished His work and was ready to die? The cottage at Nazareth with its slender furnishing had long been left: for His Prophet labours—His teaching, and His healing—Jesus received nothing; His only home for the past three years had been strangers' houses or the mountain side: pious women had given of their substance to support the little fellowship: a miracle had to be wrought wherewith to pay the Temple tax: the scanty peasant garments Jesus wore would belong to His executioners. No man hath ever lived or died with fewer earthly goods than the Master.

It is good for us to remember the condition of Jesus and the

will which He made in order that we may lay to heart that there are two kind of goods—treasures which perish in the using, and treasures which no moth can touch. One might not have a single piece of gold or silver, and yet have achieved a name which carried with it power, honour, glory, and this he could leave to his children. Here then was one possession with which Jesus did endow His family, and afterwards St. Peter and St. John found that when silver and gold were worthless, marvellous deeds of mercy could be done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. One may also have fought the battle of the soul so bravely as to have attained to high virtues, and they that follow after inherit his character. So it came to pass that St. John lived in such intimacy with Jesus

that he caught His likeness and the very tone of His words. It has also happened that one made a great discovery in his life, and has confided it to certain associates to be their portion beyond all riches. And our Master having found out the deepest and dearest of all secrets—the way of peace—did give it into the hands of His friends, and all the world were a poor price to offer for peace.

One can only give to another what he has owned himself, and as soon as Jesus makes His will and leaves peace to the Twelve, it comes to our mind that He has endowed them with the chiefest good, and has given, what beyond all men that ever lived, He Himself enjoyed. He had neither houses nor lands. One other thing He did not have, unrest. He had shame

and suffering. One other thing He did have, rest. With evident fitness and intense conviction He could face a crowd of harassed, overdriven, hopeless people, heavy laden in soul and body, and offer them rest. Never had any one seen Jesus disturbed in soul, save in grief for a friend's death, or in pity for a doomed city, or for some other reason outside Himself. If a multitude would make Him a King, He was not exalted; if they cried, 'Crucify Him,' He was not cast down. It mattered nothing to Him what was said of Him, or done with Him; and through accumulated hardships, disappointments, injustices, cruelties, Jesus preserved His high serenity. Whatever storms beat on the outer coast of His life, His soul was anchored in the fair haven of Peace.

Certainly there was a peace which Jesus did not taste once in His three years, and which He told His disciples with much frankness they were not likely to obtain. If there be, as indeed there are, two atmospheres or environments to which a man can adjust himself, the world which is seen, and the world which is not seen; then there be two kinds of peace, and one is harmony with the temporal. Suppose one should lay himself out with full intention to say with the multitude and to do the works they do, to look always on his own things, and to refuse all things unwelcome to flesh and blood, he may escape much bad weather like a ship that will not face the open sea but follows her twisting course through narrow passages. Jesus might have put Himself on good terms

with His world, which being the religious, was the most merciless if offended, the most appreciative if satisfied; and then He would have sat in the chief seats of the synagogue and would not have been crucified. If any one will do his best to make himself agreeable to his world, and not allow himself to be driven to extremities by his conscience, then this world will do its part in being agreeable to him. He may not on that account escape inevitable ills or occasional reproaches of his soul; but he can calculate on some ease of life. This is what Jesus means when He refers to the peace which the world gives.

This ease is not heart ease, and what Jesus intended by peace was not harmony with a world which passeth away but

with the Eternal. Jesus did not set Himself in wanton opposition to His surroundings — either men or circumstances—nor did He love to be ostracised and ill-used. But it was His belief that the supreme part for every man was to find out the will of God, the supreme endeavour to do the work of God. So soon as the will is plain then he must obey it at any cost, and if this obedience throws him out of gear with the world it will bring him into unison with God. It is better to be at one with the spiritual order which remaineth than with this vain show which passeth away, for God also hath His rewards and comforts. If the world called Jesus Devil and Samaritan, God said first, 'My beloved Son,' and if He was arrested as if He were a thief, the angels of God waited on Him.

The world had denied Him ease, His life was troubled ; God gave Him peace, His heart was not troubled, neither was it afraid. If we must have thorns somewhere, let us wear them on the brow rather than in the heart.

Within twelve hours the contrast between the peace of the world and the peace of God was to pass into history, when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate. By degrading intrigues and unscrupulous services this man had come to be Procurator of Judæa, and his one end was to please a suspicious emperor and retain office. He had sailed a treacherous sea with fair success, but now he knew not which way to turn. His Roman sense of justice and some faint stirrings of conscience reinforced by his wife's appeal and the countenance of the prisoner moved

Pilate to let Jesus free. The fanaticism of the Jews and the sullen menace, 'Thou are not Cæsar's friend,' appealed to the sensitive imagination of a selfish man. Between his higher and lower selves he was at his wits end. 'Knowest Thou not that I have power?' he said to Jesus with unconscious irony. What power had he who dare not obey his conscience? What peace had he who trembled behind his guards?

It was the Man before Pilate, dejected, insulted, bound, who alone had power as He was also clothed with pure Majesty. Amid the confusion of the garden, He secured the safety of His disciples although He would lift no hand for His own delivering. Helpless and lonely He pitied His judge in the straits of his cowardice and offered what

excuse could be found for Pilate. On the sorrowful way, and from beneath the burden of the Cross, He spoke kindly to the daughters of Jerusalem. Upon the Cross, when His own life was ebbing away, He gave everlasting life to a dying penitent. Why should He be disturbed or dismayed? No doubt it was a strange and dark providence that His life should end in Gethsemane and Calvary. What had He done to merit a Cross? He had tasted doubt and fear, but the conflict was now over and He saw the blue through the rift in the cloud. Everything was the will of God, and when Jesus said, 'Thy will be done,' His soul was at rest. If the Cross be the Divine Will it was a perfect and beautiful will. The power was with Jesus which nothing could dismay. If it

were for the greater good He had sat on Pilate's judgment seat: as it was He would hang upon the Cross. God did ever what was best, and so the peace of God which passeth all understanding garrisoned His heart.

Some people are apt to belittle the peace of Jesus because they have peace of life. They have had no bitter disappointments, no cruel wrestles, no crushing afflictions, no fiery afflictions. The world has dealt kindly by them and they have fitted into their environments. Moments there are when the sailors of the deep envy those that sail in the smooth sheltered waters because they have not been driven to and fro on stormy seas and been in danger of the turgid swells. Other moments the sons of tribulation pity those unfortunates who have never seen the great

billows lie down as a dog chidden by his master and God turn the storm into a calm. One half of the Bible is a closed book to them that sit at ease, because only a pierced hand can open the pages. The promises are for them whose hearts are sore: the invitations are to them who hunger. Jesus' peace was the best of all gifts to that handful of broken men in the Upper Room, whose first step would be into the darkness, but it may not seem any great thing to the favourites of this world. Yet it is not wise for any one to make too much of an outward peace, dependent on health of body, and the goods that are kept in barns and the suffrages of the multitude, which to-day cries 'Hosanna,' and to-morrow 'Crucify,' and on the whims of fickle, selfish people. Let a man be as

far-seeing, accommodating, politic, unscrupulous as may be, he cannot hope always to escape disaster, for this peace is as uncertain as the lovely Mediterranean. One day you look out through the motionless foliage on a still expanse of blue, and next morning the orange blossom is strewn upon the ground and the spray is dashing on your garden wall. 'As the world giveth.'

Other people have lost heart to believe in the peace of Jesus because they have never tasted peace of life. Circumstances seem to have conspired against them, so that they never built some lowly house of comfort but it was wrecked and their soul left desolate. They may be pardoned for not always remembering that Providence is stronger than circumstances. The

will of God stands, works, conquers, blesses. If we had our way most of us would choose a new set of circumstances and would afterwards repent bitterly. God doeth better for His sons, disarming and illuminating the things which were against us so that they become our protection—the storm on the surface hiding the eternal calm below.

The presence of Jesus shed peace on His disciples and laid to rest their nervous anxieties as well as their just fears, and the wisdom of His followers on every vexing day is to retire into His fellowship. Within a few yards of a street in our Babylon, which sounds all day long with the tramp of feet and the mixed noises of a great city's traffic, is hidden away an ancient church. As one turns aside and makes

his way to its place the babel dies into a murmur, and when he has entered in and closed the door not a sound is heard to distract the soul, and the light falls on the kneeling figure from the faces of saints who have overcome the world and are for ever in peace. So in the midst of this great commotion abideth the will of God, strong and tender, and he that hideth himself therein remembereth no longer the turmoil of life, because, with Jesus and an innumerable company of faithful men, he has made his refuge in the secret place of God.

THE LORD'S TRYSTE

In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.

He said he was going to that country he had all his life wished to see . . . just before he died, his countenance became fair, his eyes brightened, and he burst out into singing of the things he saw in heaven.—*Life of Blake.*

THE LORD'S TRYSTE

IT were not wholesome that one should think overmuch about the world to come, because in that case he might be isolated and fail to do the will of God in this present world, and therefore Jesus, who ever lived in the secret place of God, said little about the Kingdom in its glory, and rather insisted on that Kingdom in its travail. Yet there are hours when the unseen presses on the soul, and we must needs speak of what is within the veil, and so it was most human that before they parted for the 'little while,' Jesus should break silence with His friends about the other side. As a fa-

ther who is leaving his children and crossing the vast ocean in order that he may make another home in the wider space of the new world, so did this Father of a very dependent family assure them concerning that unknown place into which He was soon to disappear. He was very faithful, and took good care that His followers should not be left as orphans, for He bequeathed His peace to be their support, and promised to send them a Friend acquainted with His mind to be their guide, and now He pledged His word that as soon as the place beyond was ready for them, and they for it, He would Himself return and fetch them home.

My Father's house is a word that ever fell from Jesus' lips with a pleasant and caressing sound, and now it seemed to

come to perfection like a bud bursting into flower. According to ancient Hebrew tradition the Eternal had shown His glory in the Tent of the Wilderness, and used to dwell where the golden angels bent over the ark. Kings desired to build a habitation for God, who dwelleth not in houses made by hands, and at last in the imagination of faith the Divine Presence settled in the Temple of Jerusalem. Saints supported their piety with its visible symbols, and exiles in the homesickness of the soul turned their faces to the House of God. Here, as the nearest spot to Heaven, Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel; here the young Child Jesus was presented to the Lord with a pair of turtle doves by His Virgin Mother. It was the Temple that Jesus, in a fine heat, cleansed

from filthy lucre, and the same Temple He declared to be the mystical symbol of His Body. Jesus was indeed, in His Holy Incarnation, the Shrine of God, where God met men, and they saw God, and now when He passed into the unseen, the other world would become the House of God, our 'Father's House.'

Perhaps there may have been also a nearer and tenderer suggestion in this fine word, and Jesus was thinking of the Upper Room. He and the Apostles were gathered together in close fellowship, with the Bread and Wine before them, and the kindly light on their faces. Outside was darkness, which hung over and enswathed the goodman's house, full of distant sounds, unknown dangers, unseen people. Within the Room, after Judas passed out, was rest, confidence,

love. Jesus and His friends were at home. So much had one good man been able to do for the men he loved in this hostile Jerusalem. What could not God do for His Son and His Son's friends in the mysterious other world with its strange circumstances and imagined perils? One little circle of light created by human love, one greater circle yonder created by Divine love. St. John had been content to live for ever in that poor Room of earth, and so had they all for the peace that had fallen upon them, wherefore let them consider how much better than it hath entered into the heart must it be where there are many mansions—in the Father's House.

Jesus, who had stated many of the deep things of the spiritual world in the terms of our

common life, now declares Heaven to be another name for home, and so makes a winsome appeal to the heart. This word is indeed like unto an alabaster box of ointment very precious, whose fragrance fills the life. Into it has been gathered our most sacred memories, our tenderest associations, our brightest hopes. It matters little whether the home of one's childhood has been a cottage on a hillside or a house in some city street, round it is woven a romance of interest that grows with the years, to it travels back the heart from distant places alike of work and thought with wistful regret. As the years come and go we see our home through a golden mist, wherein all things are beautiful and perfect, and so there is no home that is not a prophecy. As

Jesus Himself was the Son of Man, that perfect Antitype after which in all ages men's minds have gone forth, so must that place from which He came be—above all we have dreamed—Home.

It was like Jesus that He does not offer any proof of Heaven, and for the same reason that our Master does not affirm the existence of God. The men of that generation might be narrow to a degree in their religious notions and very blind to spiritual excellence, but they clung to the hope of another world, from the highest unto the lowest, so that the Pharisees who did not rest till Jesus was silenced contended fiercely for the resurrection and a dying malefactor had some faint idea of Paradise. Had this been only the pathetic dream of a religious people,

whose immense sufferings had projected the days of the Messiah into the unseen, and sought in the imagination of another world, like unto St. John's Heavenly Jerusalem, the compensation for the sorrows of this, Jesus would have been very faithful. His silence is consent. Among all prophets who have spoken of the deep things of the soul none of any time or land is for a moment to be compared with Jesus. His is the last word on God, on the soul, on life, on the unseen. He ever told His disciples the truth, and when He left them with the eternal hope, He confirmed it. These are beliefs that have now to be proved if they be true, but disproved if they be untrue—and one is our Father's House.

Jesus rather gave Himself to comfort His disciples on two

matters that weigh upon the mind as we think in quiet moments of that world from which no messages come, into which we must soon all pass. It is very pleasant at a time to call Heaven home, our long last home, but as often as our thoughts play round the subject, we are chilled by the vastness and unknownness of the future life. Will it not be a cheerless change to be torn from this home of ours, some poor cottage on the Sea of Galilee, and cast on the other side, amid unfamiliar scenes, unknown faces, strange duties. If this secret misgiving had passed through the minds of the Twelve—and it may be that Jesus had seen its signs in their faces—He set Himself to take it away with all the cunning skill of love. He was going before not only to secure

His friends right of entrance and a welcome in the Father's House, but also to prepare for them a place. None knew them more intimately—their friends, their ways, their character, their circumstances. If any one could make Heaven homelike for St. John and St. Peter, for Martha and Mary, for the 'goodman of the house' it would be Jesus. As a mother, who expects her son from foreign parts, would arrange his room to remind him of his boyhood, gathering into it the things he loved and the treasures he sent on before him, so will the Master reconstruct our life beyond doubt of kindly circumstances that shall fit into our character and work, with this difference that the scale shall be of Heaven; and place us once more among those we loved and lost for a while with

only this difference that we shall not then see through a glass darkly, but face to face.

Jesus also removeth for ever another disquiet of the soul when He promises to come for His friends. Surely there must be few persons who do not think of death with awe, and any one would be cursed with a hopeless frivolity who could anticipate the great change with carelessness. Many persons, not otherwise cowardly or unbelieving, regard the end of this life with terror, and pass their days in bondage. It is an immense adventure to throw off this body as one slips off his clothes, and plunge into the unseen. One may believe in the city of light beyond and in the welcome of Jesus and yet have some natural fear of the passage. Its darkness, its loneliness, its strange-

ness appall his imagination, and it will be the greatest trial of life to bid faithful friends and familiar scenes farewell. How altogether timely is the promise of Jesus that in that hour we shall not be alone, nor even that angels shall attend us visibly who all our life have guarded us, but that the Divine Presence Itself will await and convey us. In various places and on many occasions does Jesus pledge us to meet Him in this life—at the Cross, in the Sacrament, in the crises of joy and sorrow—and now once again He appoints us a meeting-place. It is the Valley of the Shadow where, in the quietness and seclusion as in a lover's glade, He will expect us one day. Is there any spot on earth so common or so wild that it has not been transformed by love? Are there any places in

our thought so beautiful as those where we kept tryste with those that were dearer than life. So Jesus, who hath such power of regeneration that He changed the accursed tree into the Cross, and made chief sinners into saints, hath put a fair face on death so that it becometh but His dark disguise as He returneth to receive us home.

For one and all those faithful men He did as seemed to Him best. The first to see the Master on the other side was St. James; and if we questioned him he would doubtless declare that he was not able to distinguish the flash of the soldier's sword from the sheen of Jesus' garments. The last for whom Jesus came was His friend, and one can plainly see that St. John was growing lonely in his old age and wearying for the Lord,

wondering when word should come that Jesus could not any longer be content without him. 'Come quickly, Lord Jesus,' he cried, full of homesickness; and at last the Master came according to His word. Many years had come and gone since St. John went out with Jesus to Gethsemane, but his suffering, his separation, his sorrows, would seem like a dream when the two friends came once more and for ever into the 'Upper Room.'